

No 17

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PLAIN ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF IRELAND,

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POSSIBLE EVENT *4.*

OF A

FRENCH INVASION,

SHEWING ITS NATURAL CONSEQUENCES.

WITH THE TRUE INTERESTS AND DUTY OF EVERY MAN IN
THE STATE, IN SUCH AN EVENTUAL CASE.

By A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

*Si quid novisti rectius istis
Candidus imperti si non his utere mecum.*

Hor.

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PLAIN ADDRESS

**TO THE
PEOPLE OF IRELAND, &c.**

THEY who are conversant in history, and competent to turn a recollecting eye over the annals of past events, will readily recollect, that *three foreign invasions* have already taken place in these kingdoms *with success*; and that the manners, the laws, language, religion and property of the natives, have sunk into

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the possession, and under the dominion of the victorious invaders: And if we consider the desperate enterprizing spirit, and revolutionary disposition of the modern French, (the Goths of these days,) it must naturally suggest the idea, that they may be hurried forward, in the present tide of their affairs, to attempt a *fourth* invasion, from which, if it turned out unsuccessful, they would enjoy the vindictive gratification of having embarrassed our government, distracted our armies, and injured our commerce, by exciting alarm among the peaceable and opulent, and insurrection among the turbulent and factious.

Repeated instances have occurred, during this war, which point out to us the shrewd *dexterity* with which these ravagers of Europe concert and execute their wily stratagems; they *openly point* at one object, while they *secretly examine*, and suddenly *strike* at another:—And if our newspaper intelligence may be relied on, it is confidently asserted, that *sixty-thousand* men, with a suitable train of artillery, flat and gun boats, are at this moment,

moment, together with every vessel along the French Coast in a state of requisition, rendezvoused at Brest, St. Maloes and Cherbourg, seeming to menace Jersey and Guernsey; but *they* must be weak indeed, who can believe *these* to be the *real* objects of *such exertions*, or *such an armament*.

The government of both these kingdoms is most unquestionably vigilant and vigorous, our armies and our fleets are alert, and eagerly prompt to do their duty, and the latter particularly flushed with uninterrupted success, are animated to a degree of the most *enthusiastic* and glorious zeal in the cause. But still we should calmly *consider*, that a few *hours*, with a favourable gale, could waft a dangerous and a desperate foe to our Coasts, totally regardless perhaps of their own lives in the issue, provided they could enjoy the short lived triumph of a transient *diversion*, by causing alarm, or exciting internal commotion.

Being full masters of the Sea, we may, in fatal security, affect to *despise* these threats, and neglect the safe precautions of *wise anticipation* and prevention: But the ablest Generals have never yet been known to despise the *weakest* or most *contemptible* enemy. If we observe, or attend to the naval expeditions of the French, they appear to be *desultory* and *irregular*; but we find them in reality uniformly successive and repeated, calculated entirely to puzzle or elude the vigilance of our fleets and our cruizers.

Attempts of invasion it is true have been made on these Islands, at different periods, which have as often failed, frustrated by the collective energy of the inhabitants; but this *new kind* of enemy, with the *novel weapon of fraternity*, may look on the present period as most favourable to his wishes and his intentions, and may avail himself of the opportunity of a *defeat*, or a *cessation of hostilities* on the Rhine, or a *junction* of the Dutch and Spanish fleets, to push forward different, and widely distant expeditions; by these means to employ and divide our *external force*,
have

have a chance to elude or distract our *interior* strength, and hazzard every thing, under the sanguine hope of gathering something in the general scramble.

Were our people thoroughly sensible, or properly acquainted with their *true interests* in the state, and with the *real motives* and meaning of *French fraternity*, we should be fully prepared for any event, have little cause for alarm, and have every thing to expect from our native courage and intrepidity, when opposed in *such a cause* to such an enemy.—But it unfortunately falls to the lot of this small Island that sound knowledge, and pure information are thinly sown among the general body of its inhabitants, and the lower classes being profoundly ignorant of their political advantages, are, of course, fit engines to be cajoled, or inflamed by the *artful* and *designing*, who may *soothe* them with insidious lectures on their *hapless* condition, or *flatter* them with idle dreams of future emolument or preferment: Consequently some of them are wavering and indecisive, while

while others, of a *deeper die*, are fullenly hostile, and obstinately averse to our national prosperity, and our domestic happiness; and would readily yield, in the instant of surprize, to the *menace*, be caught by the *novelty* or *insinuation*, or even suddenly join in any desperate project. The designing, the discontented, or the needy *adventurer*, we well know, is always ready to join the standard of any *innovator*, from the eager hope of rioting in the spoil and plunder of the noble, the merchant, the industrious and unoffending husbandman, without giving himself one moment for consideration, on the relative connections, ties, and *dependancies* of the various members of the community.— If you injure or annihilate the opulent, the regular *stream of supply* is impeded in its course, or totally *stopped* at once, and it is *impossible*, in the nature of things, for the mechanic, the *husbandman*, or the indigent, to exist. The wealth of the one is accumulated from the exertions of the industrious, and returns back again, in employments and payments, to the artizans of various denominations and descriptions,

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tions, and thus each order reciprocally *depends* on, and *supports* the other, and will continue to do so, while the customs and usages of *past ages*, or present manners exist, and indeed *must last* as long as human nature lasts, and *must* uniformly remain the *same* until time shall be no more.

Experience in the past and passing transactions in the nations around us, might surely awaken the dullest eye, to behold what game France is playing in all her pretended and plausible schemes of general emancipation. *Ideal* liberty sounds on her lip, while murder, rapine, and tyranny, wrangle deeply in her bosom; and this we see most conspicuously marked, in the ill-fated example of *Brabant*, the Netherlands, Flanders and Holland, they cheerfully received the flattering and delusive manifesto, which preceded the *Tree of Liberty*, and danced *Ca-Ira* round it, with joyous acclamation and loud applause: Thus did the Grecian states of old, receive, with frantic joy, the proclamation of *universal freedom*, at the Olympic games; but they gained nothing but

but a *nominal* freedom, and from a mild and equitable jurisdiction, fell under the most despotic tyranny, and were all *enslaved*.

Just so, the simple and unsuspicious Germans, apprehensive of no ill consequences, dazzled and deceived, by the fleeting gleam of popular *moonshine*, swallowed this alluring bait in fatal security, while their possessions and liberties were sunk at once in the overwhelming vortex of general plunder and destruction: Now dragged from their peaceful homes by force, they are compelled to sacrifice their lives in reluctant battles, with their dearest friends and former countrymen. Their frenzy is now past, but all *hope* is likewise vanished; their wealth, their liberty, and their happiness, are clearly swept away; their treasures and armories are sacked, and their towns dismantled; being now completely ruined, and *too late* repentant, they have full leisure to look back with pensive recollection, mourn over what they *once were*; and curse, in silence, the fatal day of their egregious

egregious folly and stupidity, which lulled them into passive inactivity, and left them thus to become the easy prey, as they were at first the thoughtless *dupes*, of their more artful emancipators.

Spain has had her share, she too has tasted the *precious* fruit of this Gallic tree of liberty, the taste of which is *death*;—her fertile provinces of Catalonia, Pampeluna and Navarre, tamely yielded to the alluring promises of freedom and protection, and neglected or declined the public calls of their King, to make one resolute effort to resist this insidious enemy, and to defend their country and their laws; and soon experienced the well merited punishment of such supineness, by the pillage of all their goods, in one promiscuous sweep of general requisition, and the state at last dearly purchased, an ignominious neutrality, by a heavy contribution on the nation at large, by the dismemberment of its dominions, and the cession of an extensive portion of its ancient western territory.

Unoffending Italy groans at this instant under the severe scourges of war, desolation, and pillage:—Her councils being divided, her dominions seporate and unconnected, her inhabitants enervate and spiritless, her public exertions must be feeble, and she must necessarily fall an easy prey to her unrelenting conquerors. Had Savoy or Piedmont vigour, had Rome conduct or courage, had Genoa, Naples, Leghorn and Venice, but *common sense*, they would *all* have formed, in proper time, one general league in the *common cause*, and have acted with unanimity and spirit, against the public enemy. Then they would not at this day behold the Milanese and all Italy *over-run*, and those, whose ancestors once gave laws to all the world, a trembling, disunited, dismayed and pillaged people, depending on the tyrannic nod of a haughty victor, whose ambition and avarice cannot be satiated with the most abject submission,* or his fury appeased, without the butchery of the miserable Pavians, and the brutal and
unmanly

* Openly violated the treaty with the Duke of Tuscany, by seizing Leghorn; and also, with the Pope, by taking possession of Ferrara and Bologna.

unmanly violation of their wives and daughters, the sacking of their best towns, and perhaps the very plunder of their Capital.

We all well remember how the perpetual quarrels and struggles for pre-eminence, among the members of the Polish Diets, insensibly sapped away, and gradually dissolved the natural strength and energy of her government : One faction served as an engine to depress and subdue the other, and their mutual enmities became so irreconcilable, and their violent distractions arose to such a height, without a moments pause for reflection on their *true interests*; that nothing less than the downfall, and utter destruction of each other, could reconcile their ill-timed jealousies, pacify their jarring hatred, or terminate their mutual animosities. — This ill-judged policy, this weakness, and these divisions, did not long escape the observation of their more vigilant and more powerful neighbours, who quickly availed themselves of these dissensions, and stepping forward, at this crisis of disunion and distraction, under the specious pretext

of adjusting or healing these broils and strifes, eagerly seized on, soon dismembered and divided the whole territory, dismissed this senseless Diet, and dethroned the most learned, most unoffending and best of Princes; while Cosciusko, and his democratic followers, were all destroyed in the field, or such as escaped, immured in dungeons, have now to mourn and lament, that their *rash folly* has extinguished, for ever, the very *name of Poland*,

After surveying all these extraordinary vicissitudes, and unforeseen calamities and convulsions, which have taken place throughout Europe, in the short compass of a *few years*, the present situation of our own country demands our most serious consideration.—From calm reflection on all these great preceding events, and their obvious application, we may naturally take warning from them, to guard our native island from parallel evils and similar consequences; and the United Irishman, the Reform-man, the Defender, and the Orangeman, may clearly see, from these undeniable *facts*, what *he* may reasonably expect
from

from *such an enemy*, and what are the real schemes and projects of that enemy, in proclaiming universal liberty to other nations. That under the plausible *mask* of popular and *decentful names*; he may gain an opportunity for his fraternal embrace, and stab him to the heart; and, that, during his surprize and powerless panic, may aggrandize himself by a further extension of dominion, and accumulation of riches, may fill his exhausted magazines and empty coffers at home, and feed his famished armies abroad,

A very slight observation on the uniform plans and systematic machinations of France, will readily point out Ireland as a detached, and therefore, fit object of her warmest wishes and highest hopes: Her own resources being now totally exhausted by repeated rapine and confiscation, her commerce and revenue annihilated, her fields desolate and uncultivated, urgent necessity must goad her forward to relieve these wants, and tempt her with eager desire, and sanguine prospects,

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to grasp at our supplies. Comparatively with other parts of our empire, we have but a small portion of specie in circulation among us; we have no *valuable* vases; no *precious offerings or images* in our churches; no paintings or engravings in our palaces, to sooth or satisfy French rapacity; we have no St. Jeromes; no Apollo of Belvidere; nor one famed statue of Laocoon among us; but we have *extensive fields of linen cloth—innumerable herds of cattle*, and immense quantities of *grain*; with almost all the other necessaries of life, in vast abundance among us. *These* are our national riches, the culture and management of these engage the Peer, employ and enrich the merchant, the trader, the mechanic, and the husbandman; these supply the comforts and wants of *all*; and these alone support the whole body of *our poor*. Shall we then tamely and quietly part with these? shall we stupidly listen to the *halling manifesto*, or *insidious proclamation* of an insolent, a crafty, and a plundering invader? who would not ~~only~~ fail, in his liberal generosity, to offer the bounty of a *potatoe-garden*

garden to the poor man, the frothy promise of *peace* and *security* to the rich, and the pompous grant of some *paltry municipality* to the active and turbulent, until he had secured *them all* within his grips; and then, with the irresistible power of a forceable requisition, he would quickly strip the country, carry off our best and most valuable goods, our money, our *linens*, our *cattle*, our *corn*, and our very *potatoes* from among us; and leave us, in their stead, a few depreicated, useless *mandats* and *assignats*, a few *municipalities*, and the *Tree of Liberty*, with the song of *Ca-Ira* for our national consolation and future support.— Can it then be possible that our people will be so totally bereft of understanding, or so wholly lost and immersed, under the darkest cloud of blindness and torpor; that they cannot separate their private jealousies and disputes, from the general *public good*, and the *true interests* of *all*? Can the protestant, the catholic, or dissenter, still continue and persevere in his unnatural prejudice so long, that he can unconcernedly look on, and behold such atrocious deeds committed with impunity

impunity on his friend, his neighbour, or himself, by a merciless and marauding Frenchman? Forbid it human nature!—forbid it generous spirit of the gallant Irishman!—forbid it *common sense*!—it cannot, it *shall not be*. Let then united wisdom animate you all;—let all local strifes and lesser feuds cease—bury all private animosities in oblivion; and being all united under one standard, for the *public good*, you must, my countrymen, be invincible: This cause is common to you *all*, as the whole collective property of the island is yours in *common*. Let no audacious, or cajoling invader, lull you into fatal security, with delusive manifestos, deceitful *proclamations*, or intimidating *placards*. No man surely can be so stupidly senseless, or so ignorantly blind, not to perceive the *drift*, and clear intentions of *Gallic fraternity*; its *meaning* is too deeply written already in bloody characters throughout Europe, to be mistaken. No man, not even the most furious Jacobin, can lay his hand on his heart and declare, that the Frenchman in Flanders, in Spain, in Holland, and in Italy, would *not* act the very same part

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in Ireland, were he once suffered to gain a footing in the land, to sack, pillage and burn, and *equalize* every thing in anarchy, desolation and poverty.

If then such a foe should come, remember well, that he neither comes to *serve* or *improve* you, who are utter strangers to him, totally regardless and unconcerned in your happiness or your misery, he comes merely to enrich *himself* with your *property*, at the expense of your weakness or your intestine dissensions. You cannot be so absurd or so vain to expect that the Barbarian, who has imbrued his hands in the murder of his King, Queen and Prince, and all the hereditary Nobility; glutted himself with the assassinations of thousands of his own Ecclesiastics and most virtuous Citizens; and gorged himself with the slaughter of his own nearest Relatives and Countrymen; would not immolate and destroy you promiscuously, according as it suited his will, his caprice, or answered the purposes of his policy.

Tros Tyriusque nullo discrimine habetur.

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When England considers this matter, and sees it in its true light, she will act that part which wisdom and political necessity must dictate: Being precluded, by the exigencies of the war, from sending ample aid and effectual assistance against a day of surprize, she ought not, she need not act in these times with too much caution, nor forbear calling forth the full strength and exertions of the realm. Her friends here are very *numerous*, decidedly *loyal* to their King, and most *firmly attached* to the Constitution, while she hesitates or doubts of the expedience, the critical moment may slip, as it recently happened to Broglie at Paris, and Ireland may be lost for ever. Let then the whole nation be apprized beforehand, and made fully sensible of the approaching danger; let them have one fixed rallying point for all, they will thus be fully prepared for any event, and avoid the usual confusion and dismay, incident on sudden alarms. Let the counties and parishes assemble, let them assume a dignified and manly prudence, let them imitate the Yeomanry in England, or the safe policy and formidable

formidable prudence of the Swiss Cantons, whose standing army is in general but small, to protect their properties, and preserve their independence, but being all united and leagued together, in one common bond of general association, with their names registered and enrolled, ready to fly to arms on the first signal of alarm, they could, if the emergency was sudden, or the danger urgent, muster an armed body of *two hundred thousand* men, in *ten hours*.

Should something like this be adopted here and the courage and loyalty of the kingdom called forth and enrolled under the controul and direction of government, formed under the banner of our sovereign—conducted by his generals, and ready to act with and animate the exertions of the military in the day of danger:—You would soon *over-awe the public enemy*, dismay the factious and designing, give vigor to trade, and stability to public credit;—with such internal unanimity and virtuous firmness, added to the glorious

zeal and courage of your invincible tars by sea, you might then *despise* the idle menace of any foe—you might rest at home with peaceful minds, pursue with spirit and activity your usual industry, and give chearful speed to the plough; so that all might follow their respective occupations with honest diligence and happy security; and what is infinitely of higher consequence by *such conduct* and a full imitation of your example in the sister kingdoms, you will ultimately compel your mortal enemy this *ravager of all Europe* to *stop* his headlong career—listen to the cries of humanity, and the voice of reason, and viewing you calmly *resting* upon your arms, through *hopeless despair*, he will at last endeavour to seek repose in the blessings of a general and a lasting peace.

But should the fates ordain things otherwise, and that this foreign invader should desperately presume to force his entrance upon your coasts, he cannot rush upon you my countrymen unawares or by surprize;—then “To your tents O Israel”—sound the alarm
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from shore to shore, call forth your fullest strength and cover your whole coasts with the multitudes of your embattled legions, and in defending your homes, your wives and your children, tell this audacious ravager that death is preferable to his invasion, and that the sons of Ireland would sooner perish to a man than submit to his insult or his injury; and in repelling his *aggressions*: Tell him, in the allowable justice of your resentment, that nothing shall protect him from the consequences of your wantonly provoked, and highly indignant vengeance.

FINIS

This Lasty sketch on the ruins of the day to the Pt. Hon. I convey Sq. from the Author with his best compliments

from shore to shore, call forth your
strength and cover your whole coast with the
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than submit to his tortures of his injury, and
in repelling his aggression, Tell him, in the
name of justice of your Vindicta, that
nothing shall protect him from the con-
sequences of your vengeance, and
highly indignant vengeance.

